

Portage Lake Harbor Commission

Onekama Township
5435 Main Street
Onekama, MI 49675

September 26, 2012

Representative Frank Foster,
Chair of the House Natural Resources,
Tourism & Outdoor Recreation Committee

Dear Representative Foster;

I'm sorry I could not be with you today, but want to bring to your attention that Portage Lake Harbor in Onekama, is in trouble! This 365' x 1100' "Harbor of Refuge" remains compromised. Sand bars and erosion have turned this once proud and beautiful Port into a dangerous lake entrance for local citizens and Lake Michigan Boaters.

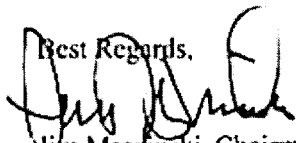
In fact, in July of 2007, (4) lives were nearly lost when the "Barracuda", a "Mackinaw Sailing Race" Yacht coming South after the race, tried to enter the Harbor. Going aground in rough seas, it was nearly lost in the channel mouth and eventually sank outside the breakwater when its keel pounded out of its bottom from the impact with the channel floor. These boaters later told us they were relying on the fact that Portage Lake was a recognized Harbor of Refuge, so felt secure in coming into the Harbor to escape the storm. But, here is an actual example of future events now that the Great Lakes water levels have dropped, thus compounding the shallow water of the Harbor from lack of dredging.

Mr. Foster, without a clear access to Portage Lake through our Harbor of Refuge channel, a full (200) jobs and (3) million dollars of revenue will be in danger of loss and it's calculated that property values within the basin of Portage and surrounding areas would drop by 35%. Without infrastructure repairs and dredging, an already struggling Onekama economy will likely collapse. This is why it is critical that dredging and infrastructure repair be done now. With several harbors in our area needing work, please note that the Corps of Engineers has designated Portage Lake as the Harbor in most "imminent danger of collapsing" thus closing. The closing of a Harbor of Refuge should be unacceptable to the representatives of the citizens of Michigan.

Our hope is that the assistance by State and Federal officials as a unified group can save this Harbor Community from failure.

Please support Resolution #325 and do all you can to facilitate these much needed repairs to the Portage Lake Harbor and thank you for your assistance.

Best Regards,



Jim Mrozinski, Chairman
Portage Lake Harbor Commission